

DECLARATION OF THE XIV FORUM OF MINISTERS OF CULTURE AND OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF CULTURAL POLICIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean, hereinafter called "The Forum", gathered in Caracas on the 28th and 29th of September, 2005, hereby affirm the relevance of the Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean as the founding body of intergovernmental dialogue among our countries to favor regional cultural integration.

The Forum hereby stresses its specific vocation vis-à-vis other regional entities and mechanisms which its Member States are party to, insofar as this Forum promotes dialogue among its peers, encourages South-South cooperation, acknowledges the identity, common expectations, and fosters the unity of the diverse cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Forum hereby reaffirms its recognition and respect for the culture of the indigenous peoples and the peoples of African and other origins, acknowledging them as a cornerstone of Caribbean and Latin American identity and hereby commits to strengthen their development in accordance with the principles and values of their cosmo vision and to promote intercultural dialogue within the framework of universal human rights.

The Forum commits itself to adequately collaborate with other regional spaces, so that the interests shared by its Member States become a benchmark when making decisions aimed at cultural integration and at the development of international solidarity as these relate to culture.

The Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean hereby commits itself to develop consistent and coordinated cooperation efforts with a view to preserve its cultural heritage and expand the opportunities of its peoples to create and express their cultural manifestations under conditions of freedom and dignity.

Therefore, the Forum hereby reiterates its support to the "Draft Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions" of UNESCO, as a means to guarantee cultural diversity and the blossoming of creativity and cultural industries in its Member States.

The Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean acknowledges that this Forum provides a privileged opportunity to build bridges between the countries of Latin America and the countries of the Caribbean and to shape a common Region enriched by dialogue and permanent exchange and interaction amongst its peoples and cultures.

The Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean attending the meeting acknowledge the friendship, generosity, and solidarity of the people and the government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for hosting this open and sincere dialogue among their countries.

The Forum hereby expresses its gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for generously offering to host the XV Forum, in 2006, thus ensuring the continuity of the will to strengthen the unity of the peoples and cultures of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally, the Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean hereby ratify the validity of the Forum, and their commitment to institutional strengthening in favor of the social and cultural processes of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Caracas, September 29th, 2005